

Pandemic
Influenza:
PREPARED
for ACTION



How the Public Health Unit Can Assist You During an Influenza Pandemic

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Overview

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- Public Health Unit supports during a pandemic
- Planning Strategies for faith groups

Public Health Unit Supports

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Public Education

- Communicate accurate, up-to-date information before and during a pandemic
- Communication tools include media releases, websites, printed materials, telephone hotlines, mass media campaigns
- Fact sheets and numerous other documents in draft; topics include symptoms, hand hygiene, caring for family members, when and where to go for treatment, precautions at home and work, how to isolate ill at home, how to quarantine contacts of ill persons

Public Health Unit Supports

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Public Health Measures

- To be decided upon and communicated by public health unit officials
- Some of the public health measures that may be considered include:
 - Travel restrictions
 - Screening requirements
 - Restrictions on public gatherings
 - School/daycare closings

Planning for Faith Groups₍₁₎

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- Appoint a team to develop your plan
- Identify critical services/functions
 - What aspects of your faith group will continue to function?
 - How is this decision made?
 - Will it vary by phase?
- Identify services/functions that can be cancelled or postponed

Planning for Faith Groups₍₂₎

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- Develop strategies to keep your critical services/functions up and running during a pandemic
 - Plan with others you depend on and that depend on you
 - May need to work with other faith groups and community-based organizations
- Test your plan

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- Consider impacts on employees, staff, and volunteers
 - Identify and train essential staff/volunteers and back-ups
 - Develop policies for sick leave, overtime, flexible work arrangements
- Develop strategies to limit the spread of influenza within your faith community
 - Infection control precautions

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Communication goal

“People who have had time to get used to the idea ...of a pandemic... are likelier to understand their risks, follow official advice, and take an active role in protecting themselves”

Peter M. Sandman, 2005
Pan American Health Organization

Planning for Faith Groups⁽⁵⁾

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- Communication and Education
 - Your staff, volunteers: plans, education, cross-training
 - Your faith group members: sharing of plans; educating on infection control, science of influenza pandemic; etc.
 - Your partners: sharing of plans
 - Local municipality and public health unit
 - How can your faith group support the local response?

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- Communication and Education
 - Identify sources for accurate and up-to-date information on influenza pandemic (e.g., public health unit, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, etc.)
 - Widely distribute information on influenza to staff, volunteers, faith group members, others
 - Suggested communication methods include newsletters, sermons, meetings, websites, phone messages, phone trees, etc.

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- Communication and Education
 - Develop strategies to deal with fear and misinformation
 - Ensure information and support is widely accessible (e.g., appropriate language, culturally sensitive, plain language)
 - Identify those with special needs and establish plan to communicate and support

Things to Think About

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- Long-term illness leave/care giving leave
- Providing care for those who become ill at work
- Working from home/flexible hours
- Infection prevention and control
- Protocols for travel
- When will you start activating your plan

Resource Considerations

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- Stockpile essential supplies (e.g., alcohol-based hand cleaner, tissues, liquid pump soap, cleaning agents, etc.)
- Decide where to focus energy
- Consider how to use your existing technology (e.g., website, phone hotlines, answering machines, etc.)

Part of the Community⁽¹⁾

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- Establish contact and collaborate with local public health unit and municipal government
- Support your own members in accessing information and services
- Coordinate with other faith-based and community-based organizations (e.g. determine who does what, etc.)

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Mass fatality planning considerations include:

- Increased number of deaths at home
- Overburdened coroners, funeral homes, grief counsellors, faith leaders
- Potential restrictions on viewings and funerals (i.e., limit large gatherings)
- Individuals who don't have local religious contacts

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Mass Vaccination Clinics

- Role of faith groups could include:
 - Reassurance
 - Translation
 - Promotion
 - Facilities